

~~I PRACTICE MAGAZINE~~

~~DOUBT~~

~~MAY 2021~~



Dear Reader,
Thank you for joining us yet another month for the I Practice Magazine.

This month I wanted to experiment with a new type write and to make the magazine more streamlined, rather than chaotic.

This way I hope To let the articles shine fully and to not let the design distract you from the genius of our contributors.

Speaking about our contributors, we have some very interesting stories lined up for you.

Alvaro will be talking about strokes of meaning, an essay the discovers what to say in your art and what we can do to make our magic deeper.

Gareth Talks about the art of medicine, yes! There is art in medicine, you might have not known it, but there is a whole secret society of medicine practitioners (sort of like us magicians) that work on their trait and try to make it art full.

Finally I will be talking about symbolism, what is the role of symbolism in magic and why is it important?

I hope that all of you will enjoy this edition of magazine and if you ever want to contribute to the magazine, we would love to receive your contributions at invisiblepractice52@gmail.com

Magic and Symbolism
By Rico Weeland



Symbolism is a wonderful, magical and mystical thing. It is something that we can trace all the way back to Paleolithic times where cave paintings were made of a shaman laying on the ground in a trance wearing a birdlike mask (the symbol of transcendence and freedom) (Jung, Franz, Henderson, Jacobi & Jaff , 1964, P,147). But symbolism is also something that we can see in more recent times with ever improving new psychological discoveries and the exploration of the abyss that we call the unconscious mind.

The unconscious or subconscious mind as Freud would call it is the part of our consciousness where all the memories and knowledge that we have forgotten goes. But of

course, that is not the only function of the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind is also a place where a big part of our identity lays and where we push parts of our own personality that we deny, our shadow. (Jung & Franz, 1964, P,171).

Our unconscious mind doesn't communicate with a sense of logic, very often it shows us images in terms of symbolism in a haptic and chaotic way as can be seen in our dreams (Jung & Franz, 1964, P,3). Our conscious mind on the other hands likes to communicate in a logical manner, it likes drama structures that have a beginning a middle and an end (Aristotle, 2013, P26) that structure has some logic to it and it tends to be the way that we tell each other

stories. It starts here, then this happened and this is how it ended. That's a satisfying story line and it feels right and complete. The unconscious mind however doesn't care about this concept whatsoever. It just gives you a dream where you have a scary experience, you finally find a piece of treasure which then turns you into a bird and you wake up. That's it. You might wake up confused asking yourself what this dream meant, or you might wake up not remembering or caring about it at all.

The dream that the unconscious mind sends our way however was filled with symbolism. Symbolism which we can trace back to mythology, fairy tales and even to art. Mythology has always had an important

role to us as humans. It was used to give meaning to life, to explain the universe, to establish social order and for the psychological development of the individual (Campbell, 2004, P,3). It is even believed that mythology has become a part of human collective unconscious (Campbell, 2008, P,6) and that it will come back in different stages of our life, our subconscious mind uses it to tell us things.

Mythology has also always had an important role in carrying the human spirit forward and to help us to endure difficult times (Campbell, 2008, P,6). It has helped us to develop ourselves and to give us direction in life. It is even said that discovering your myth can be your pathway

to bliss. If this wasn't true than why would Jung have spent most of his life searching for his personal myth?

Knowing the above, how does mythology and symbolism translate into art?

Well since symbolism and mythology has had such a big impact on the human race throughout history and it has helped many humans through tough times (remember even biblical stories and stories from the Quran are mythology). It can be translated into art and it should be, that's the point of art after all: "To translate wisdom and knowledge into experience" (Campbell, 1990, P,33).

That is exactly why symbolism is so important. It points to something deeper, something that will have a lasting impact on the human being that sees the piece of art, and so following Gabi's ultimate conception, the human being who enters the show will be a different one than the one leaving the show.

Symbolism is always found mythology and as mentioned earlier it helps us to develop psychologically. In every mythology there is some lesson to be learned, some aspect of ourselves that needs honoring and there are many answers to live's existential questions.



When symbolic aspects are properly used in art, or in our case in magic it will have a transformative experience on the beholder. At least, it leaves the doors open for this experience to happen. We have to understand that we can't force someone into a certain experience. But, as long as the images are present, we can potentially change someone's life.

This of course is not the only role of putting symbolism in art. It can also give our art more depth and in if properly constructed we can create something that is enjoyable for everyone. We could construct our magic in such a way that people who are just there for simple fun can experience that, while people who are open for something deeper

can have deeper experience.

Rico Weeland

The point of putting symbolism into art is because we are creating something to speak to the unconscious mind and at the same time it will feel very safe. It feels meaningful and if not overdone it will leave your audience with a poetic and beautiful experience.



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FROM THE STROKES, TO THE MEANING



ALBERBEL

When we contemplate a painting, we can differentiate the lines, the representation, the meaning. These three dimensions coexist and reflect the inner world of the artist.

In magic it should be the same: we should be able to differentiate the methods (internal life), the exposure (external life), the proposal. Unfortunately, in recent years much research has been done in the search for new methods and in the study of how to cover them, but very little progress has been made regarding the proposals and, when it has been done, on many occasions it has been to the detriment of the inner life.

First of all, there must be a moment during the creative process in which we

organize the proposal on a dramatic level in order to develop a conflict and find the best way to resolve it with magic; then we will look for the methods. It is also important that both the choice of theme and the choice of methods are consistent with our way of being and expressing ourselves, it is essential to communicate through the piece. Any aesthetic variation that breaks the general line of the act will be out of context.

On the other hand, it is relevant to know the meaning of what we do and why we do it and, although most viewers do not manage to deduce each and every one of the details of our work, it does not mean that we should not give it the depth that our discipline deserves. Our act of



magic will speak for us, tell, show, something we want it to show or tell. The richer it is, the better. But, how can we enrich an act of magic?

Jan Assmann, author of *The Magic Flute*, a book that analyzes the symbolism and meaning of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, comments that in this work each note, each

silence, has a meaning. Throughout the pages the author develops such an idea. This, of course, can be extrapolated to magic. For example, why do we use a Four of Diamonds to perform a certain act and not an Eight of Clubs? Normally we tend to stay with arguments that deal with issues related to visibility, with the space that certain cards offer to be

signed... I wonder, why don't we think about the symbols behind the identity of the cards?

We are continually thinking about how to please the viewer and what magic can mean to the audience, the question is, what does magic mean to the magician? What if an act of magic hid something beyond what a spectator or a

magician could see or intuit? What if a *transducer* was needed? I take the term *transducer* from the professor of Literature Jesús González Maestro, developed in his work *Critique of Literary Reason*. What if we needed to know information about the author's life, his current of thought, historical context, stylistic notions...

in order to interpret the work?

It would be wonderful if expert interpreters emerged in deciphering the works of magicians as it is done in Classical Music or Literature. It would be wonderful to undertake that journey in search of the expressive gaze of the author at the moment of creation, to enter his head and decipher his feelings. But, to be able to do that, it is first necessary that there are magicians willing to pursue that path and that they work the proposal at such a deep level.

Magic is still a young discipline, there is still a lot of work to do.

For the moment, it is more than enough if we can do good magic.

AL Berbel



The Art Of Medicine

By

Gareth Bell

Hello 'i practice' reader, my name is Gareth. I've been practicing, reading and studying magic some 30 plus years. I perform infrequently. I think about magic, often...very very often.

When Rico asked me to write something for I practice he explained he wanted to examine what we, as magicians, might learn from other arts. Unfortunately, I have no expertise in literature, music, song, poetry or even, all things considered, performance art.

I am heading into my 25th year as a Physiotherapist. Over those 25 years I have developed expertise in one art-form. An art-form not often discussed outside of it's practitioners.

The Art of Medicine.

That art practiced by all who aim to ease pain and suffering, it goes hand in hand to that science that is directed at treating disease.

Sir William Osler, the Father of Modern Medicine, said, "The good physician treats the disease; the great physician treats the patient who has the disease."

What? The Art of MEDICINE!? What a crock o'shit. How is there *art* in Medicine?

It may surprise you, that discussion of this art garners many column inches in medical journals. I'm not talking about alternative medicine, naturopathic, homeo-new-age-potion-mixers journals.

I'm talking New England Journal of Medicine, The Lancet, British Medical Journal. These are the Linking Rings/Geniis of the medical world. In 2015 the journal, Canadian Family Physician, published an entire volume dedicated solely to The Art of Medicine.

If medicine was pure deduction, a simple case of working through an algorithm, it would have been automated years ago.

The vast majority of my career has been spent either in hospitals or General Practice with your local family doctor. Over that time I have worked with scores of different doctors. Every one of





them has had, in essence, the same training, been taught the same fundamentals and practiced the same skills.

Equally, all the doctors I've ever known practiced this Art, but not equally as well.

This Art--part experience, part personality, part attitude, believe it or not, directly relates to their effectiveness as a doctor. It is the art of reading a situation and adjusting his delivery, his interaction, his approach and his emphasis accordingly during a consultation with a patient. It is not innate, it is a result of reflective practice, of looking back on what worked, what didn't and why. It is known most commonly as his, '*Bed-side Manner*'. Here's the

important bit, it's something that requires work.

Highlighted in that 2015 volume of Canadian Family Physician, is the story of Dr Ignaz Semmelweis, an Obstetrician working in Vienna in 1848 (which of course makes him a contemporary of The Father of Card Magic himself, Johann Nepomuk Hofzinsler).

Dr Semmelweis showed that doctors could, by washing their hands in a chlorine solution after doing autopsies and before examining pregnant women about to deliver, reduce mortality from sepsis from 12.2% to 2.4%. Semmelweis was right, but he is remembered because his writing style and manner were "repetitious, egotistical and bellicose"

and he could not bring about the immediate change in practice he fervently desired. Dr Semmelweis didn't communicate clearly. He didn't cultivate sufficient interest and he didn't make the therapeutic effect clear. His work was not meaningful, at least not as meaningful as it should have been.

Would an understanding of the art of medicine have benefited Dr Semmelweis? Would an ability to communicate an idea more...artfully, have created change and ultimately saved lives?

I can't tell you what your magical *Bedside Manner* is. I can't tell you how to find it. Find it though, you must and when you do, work on it.

I can tell you what it isn't. It isn't your *Character*, nor your *Script*. It certainly isn't measured by your number of *views* or *followers*.

I think it's all of the techniques, methods, theories you learn mixed with hard work, practice and most importantly, yourself.

The best in the business have cultivated it, they examine it, they nurture it; Hannibal, Haydn, Close, Elmsley, Carlyle, Skinner, Carney...the best of the best. Where possible watch their work. More importantly read their thoughts about the performance of the art of magic.

In *Workers 5* (1996) Michael Close espouses *meaningful* and *memo-*

orable magic. Read as much of his work as you can. Dr Semmelweis's pregnant patients might have benefitted from him reading Michael's thoughts.

In his recent magnificent work, *Sleights and Insights* (2020), John Carney writes, "Some people become doctors because their Grandfathers were doctors, others because the money is good, or because it might increase their social standing. But some become doctors because they love helping people, and are driven to find solutions in medical studies to cure them. Or ease their suffering. Which of these doctors would you want treating you?" p. 20.

You know which of today's magicians are in the first clause and you know which are in the latter. My advice, take it or leave it, be in the latter.



References:

Coda: Hofzinger married his wife Wilhemine Bergmann in 1854. Around the time Dr Semmelweis was a leading Obstetrician in Vienna. Hofzinger and Wilhemine's marriage lasted 21 years until Johann's death in 1875. Their marriage ended childless.

In the words of Hofzinger uber-fan, the late, great Ricky Jay... "just a thought".

Gareth Bell

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Bio Gareth

Gareth grew up in the UK. His earliest magic related memory is a fairly morbid one involving Tommy Cooper. He never missed an episode of Paul Daniels always waiting to see if Paul could top Tommy. Paul never did. In his late 20's he took his objectionable sense of humour to Australia and stayed. He lives with his family in Tasmania, Australia's island state. A long, long way from everywhere. You can find him now and again at www.themagiciansforum.com or on IG [@garethmagician](https://www.instagram.com/garethmagician)

Bio Alvaro

Alvaro is the Co-founder of Invisible-Practice, the home of the wonderful magazine you are reading.

He has won multiple national and international prizes such as the: Nordic Countries international award, the Second National Award for Card Magic in Spain and many more. Alvaro is currently spending his time working on his trilogy "The book" this starts with Chelsea that is soon to be released.

Alvaro is a wonderful thinker, creator and philosopher of magic and you can find out more about him right here: [@Alvaroberbel](https://www.instagram.com/Alvaroberbel)



Bio Rico

Rico With a R is a magic fanatic, student, teacher, philosopher and the editor of this magazine based in the Groningen area in the Netherlands. Rico has lectured in multiple countries such as Poland, Italy and The United Kingdom.

Currently he is 22 years old and if you catch him at a convention than feel free to invite him for a beer.

You can find Rico on instagram with [@rico_weeland](https://www.instagram.com/rico_weeland)



Instagram



Invisible Practice is a project that started and is still continuing on Instagram. On the Instagram you will find different essays and tips about magic. Click the picture or the link below to find out more.

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At Invisible Practice we are trying to change the perception of how we as magicians see magic, and also how our audiences experience magic. We want to leave magic better than we found it.

In an age where everybody is searching for the new, the next best thing, we feel many old traditions, wisdoms and lessons in magic are becoming lost to the currents of this digital age and fast paced world of eye candy and shallow magic. That is why we created Invisible Practice in the first place, and we stand by our mission.

We know on our hearts there are magicians/ artists like us and we believe in order to affect change, we cannot do it alone...we need a mighty army!

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